United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea CLCS/58

Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf

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Statement by the Chairman of the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf on the progress of work in the Commission

1. The Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf held its twenty-first session at United Nations Headquarters from 17 March to 18 April 2008, pursuant to the decision taken at its twentieth session (see CLCS/56, para. 60) and to paragraph 49 of General Assembly resolution 62/215. The plenary part of the session was held from 31 March to 11 April. The periods from 17 to 28 March and from 14 to 18 April were used for the technical examination of submissions at the Geographic Information System (GIS) laboratories and other technical facilities of the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea, Office of Legal Affairs.

2. The following 19 members of the Commission attended the session: Alexandre Tagore Medeiros de Albuquerque, Osvaldo Pedro Astiz, Harald Brekke, Galo Carrera Hurtado, Francis L. Charles, Peter F. Croker, Mihai Silviu German, Abu Bakar Jaafar, Indurlall Fagoonee, Emmanuel Kalngui, Yuri Borisovitch Kazmin, Wenzheng Lu, Isaac Owusu Oduro, Yong-ahn Park, Fernando Manuel Maia Pimentel, Sivaramakrishnan Rajan, Michael Anselme Marc Rosette, Philip Alexander Symonds and Kensaku Tamaki.

3. Lawrence Folajimi Awosika could not attend the session owing to circumstances beyond his control. George Jaoshvili did not attend the session. It is noted that, since the election of the present membership of the Commission, Mr. Jaoshvili has not assumed his functions and has not made the solemn declaration as required by the rules of procedure of the Commission (CLCS/40/Rev.1) and that no communication has been received from him.

4. The Commission had before it the following documents and communications:

(a) Provisional agenda (CLCS/L.24);

(b) Statement by the Chairman of the Commission on the progress of work at its twentieth session (CLCS/56);

(c) Issues related to the workload of the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf — tentative dates of submissions: note by the Secretariat (SPLOS/INF/20);

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(d) General Assembly resolution 62/215;

(e) Submission of Australia dated 15 November 2004 made pursuant to article 76, paragraph 8, of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and addressed through the Secretary-General of the United Nations to the Commission;

(f) Submission of New Zealand dated 19 April 2006 made pursuant to article 76, paragraph 8, of the Convention and addressed through the Secretary-General to the Commission;

(g) Joint submission of France, Ireland, Spain and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland dated 19 May 2006 made pursuant to article 76, paragraph 8, of the Convention and addressed through the Secretary-General to the Commission;

(h) Submission of Norway dated 27 November 2006 made pursuant to article 76, paragraph 8, of the Convention and addressed through the Secretary-General to the Commission,

(i) Submission of France dated 22 May 2007 made pursuant to article 76, paragraph 8, of the Convention and addressed through the Secretary-General to the Commission;

(j) Submission of Mexico dated 13 December 2007 made pursuant to article 76, paragraph 8, of the Convention and addressed through the Secretary-General to the Commission;

(k) Communications from States: letter from the head of the delegation of Australia dated 17 March 2008 addressed to the Chairman of the Commission; letter from the head of the delegation of New Zealand dated 31 March 2008 addressed to the Chairman of the Commission; letter from the Focal Point on behalf of the delegations of France, Ireland, Spain and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland dated 1 February 2008 addressed to the Chairman of the Commission; and note verbale from the Permanent Mission of Tonga to the United Nations dated 8 April 2008 addressed to the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

Item 1
Opening of the twenty-first session by the Chairman of the Commission

5. The session was opened by the Chairman of the Commission, Alexandre Tagore Medeiros de Albuquerque.

6. The Director of the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea, Václav Mikulka, made a statement in which he informed the Commission about the work carried out by the Secretariat following the adoption of General Assembly resolution 62/215 to ensure enhanced support for and assistance to the Commission and its subcommissions before the twenty-first session. In particular, he noted the acquisition of licences for the software packages required by the Commission to analyse the submissions it receives; the upgrade to the computer network used by the Commission and its subcommissions; and the establishment of a third permanent GIS laboratory on the premises of the Division. The Director also recalled that the

seventeenth Meeting of States Parties requested coastal States parties to submit to the Secretariat information on whether they intend to make a submission to the Commission, and requested the Secretariat to report the information thus collected to States parties. He pointed out that such information is now available in the note by the Secretariat on issues related to the workload of the Commission (SPLOS/INF/20), which confirms that the Commission should expect a high volume of submissions in the coming years. He also stated that, following the issuance of that document, the Secretariat had been informed by some States which had not responded to the initial request to provide information of their intention to make a submission. It was also possible that States that had given no indication of their intention to make a submission might nevertheless do so.

Item 2
Adoption of the agenda

7. The Chairman proposed the provisional agenda for consideration by the Commission. The provisional agenda was adopted without amendment (CLCS/57).

Item 3
Organization of work

8. The Chairman outlined the programme of work and the schedule for the Commission's deliberations on the various items on the agenda. Following a discussion, the Commission agreed on the programme of work.

Item 4
Consideration of the submission made by Australia to the Commission pursuant to article 76, paragraph 8, of the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea

Consideration of recommendations

9. At its nineteenth session, the Commission decided to defer the adoption of the recommendations prepared by the Subcommission to the twentieth session of the Commission in order to provide its members with further time to examine them. At its twentieth session, the Commission decided to defer the adoption of the recommendations to the twenty-first session in view of ongoing deliberations on certain critical issues.

10. At its twenty-first session, the Commission continued the thorough examination of the recommendations and of outstanding issues. Several amendments were proposed, and the Commission decided to incorporate some of them into the text of the recommendations.

11. In its examination of the recommendations, the Commission proceeded on a region-by-region basis and, in instances where all efforts to achieve consensus had been exhausted, resorted to decision-making by way of a formal vote preceded by indicative voting. On 9 April 2008, the Commission adopted the "Recommendations of the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf in regard to the

submission made by Australia on 15 November 2004 on information on the proposed outer limits of its continental shelf beyond 200 nautical miles" by a formal vote of 14 to 3, with 1 abstention. Pursuant to article 6, paragraph 3, of annex II to the Convention, the recommendations were submitted in writing to the coastal State and to the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

Item 5
Consideration of the submission made by New Zealand to the Commission pursuant to article 76, paragraph 8, of the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea

Report of the Chairman of the Subcommission regarding the progress of work during the twentieth session and prior to and during the twenty-first session

12. The Chairman of the Subcommission, Mr. Brekke, informed the Commission that the Subcommission met during the resumed twentieth session of the Commission, from 21 to 25 January 2008. He indicated that the results of its work, which dealt with all matters outstanding at that stage, were communicated to New Zealand in the form of preliminary considerations dated 25 January 2008. On 13 March, New Zealand responded to those preliminary considerations. On 24 March, the Subcommission resumed its work and held a meeting with the delegation of New Zealand. Thereafter, the Subcommission finalized the preparation of the recommendations, and on 28 March it presented a summary thereof to the delegation of New Zealand.

Consideration of recommendations

13. On 3 April, the Subcommission submitted the text of the "Recommendations of the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf in regard to the submission made by New Zealand on 19 April 2006" to the Commission and introduced them by delivering a series of presentations focusing on the four geographical regions covered in the submission made by New Zealand, as well as on certain aspects or areas which required more detailed analysis.

14. Also on 3 April, at the request of the delegation of New Zealand, a meeting was held between the delegation and the Commission.

15. An introductory statement was made by the head of the delegation of New Zealand, Gerard van Bohemen, who emphasized the efficient and constructive interaction that had taken place between the Subcommission and the delegation. In this connection, he indicated that in several cases the delegation had amended its approach in response to the Subcommission's views and that, as a result, there were no differences in the views of the Subcommission and the delegation.

16. On the issue of maritime delimitation, Mr. Van Bohemen informed the Commission that the northern region identified in the submission includes areas of continental shelf that remain subject to delimitation with Fiji and Tonga. He stated that, even though during the time of the examination of the submission no significant progress had been made on the matter, none of the States involved had expressed any objection to the Commission's considering the submission on the basis that the submission and any recommendations on it are without prejudice to delimitation or the right of these States to present their own submissions in future.

Mr. Van Bohemen confirmed that the submission had been made on that basis. He also added that the Government of New Zealand had recently updated the Governments of Fiji and Tonga[1] on the progress made in respect of the submission made by New Zealand and that both States had confirmed that they had no objection to the Commission's issuing recommendations on the basis set out above. He also referred to the potential need for the delimitation of the continental shelf with France (New Caledonia), confirming that, in this respect, too, the submission of New Zealand is made without prejudice to any future potential delimitation.

17. Subsequently, Ian Wright, Principal Scientist and Centre Leader, National Centre for Coasts and Oceans, National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research, outlined some of the key elements of the submission made by New Zealand and provided information about features of the New Zealand continental margin.

18. The Commission decided to defer consideration of the recommendations to the twenty-second session, pursuant to rule 53 of the rules of procedure (CLCS/40/Rev.1).

Item 6
Consideration of the joint submission made by France, Ireland, Spain and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the Commission pursuant to article 76, paragraph 8, of the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea

Presentation by the delegations of France, Ireland, Spain and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

19. In a letter dated 1 February 2008, the four delegations made a request to address the Commission on the implications of the decision of the Commission regarding joint submissions reflected in paragraphs 27 and 28 of the statement by the Chairman on the progress of work at the twentieth session (CLCS/56). Accordingly, the Commission invited the delegations of France, Ireland, Spain and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to make a presentation to the Commission on 10 April 2008. Doug Wilson, Focal Point for the four delegations, spoke on behalf of the delegations.

20. In his presentation, Mr. Wilson set out the concerns of the four delegations in relation to the decision made by the Commission at its twentieth session. The Commission then proceeded to consider, in a closed session, the issues addressed in the presentation.

Report of the Chairman of the Subcommission regarding the progress of work prior to and during the twenty-first session

21. The Chairman of the Subcommission, Mr. Jaafar, informed the Commission that the Subcommission met during the resumed twentieth session, from 21 to 23 January 2008, and had a productive exchange of views with the four delegations,

[1] It is noted that Tonga transmitted to the Commission through the Secretariat a note verbale dated 8 April 2008. The note has been posted on the Commission website, which is maintained by the Division.

particularly on matters relating to the further examination of the joint submission and the decision taken by the Commission at its twentieth session (see CLCS/56, para. 28).

22. During the twenty-first session, the Subcommission continued its examination of the joint submission and took into consideration a presentation made by the four delegations on 22 January 2008. The Subcommission met with the four delegations on 14 April 2008, following the presentation made by the Focal Point for the four delegations to the Commission on 10 April. The Subcommission presented to the four delegations its views resulting from the evaluation of the scientific and technical data and information contained in the joint submission. Those views were formulated on the basis of article 76 of the Convention, as well as the Scientific and Technical Guidelines of the Commission (CLCS/11). The Subcommission informed the four delegations of the plans for its future work.

23. The Subcommission agreed that, during the twenty-second session, its meetings would be held from 11 to 15 August and from 2 to 5 September 2008.

Item 7
Consideration of the submission made by Norway to the Commission pursuant to article 76, paragraph 8, of the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea

Report of the Chairman of the Subcommission regarding the progress of work prior to and during the twenty-first session

24. The Chairman of the Subcommission, Mr. Symonds, informed the Commission that the Subcommission met in New York during the resumed twentieth session, from 24 January to 1 February 2008. During that period the Subcommission had four meetings with the delegation of Norway and posed a number of questions, to many of which the delegation responded in part or in full during the session. Norway had arranged for a representative of GeoCap to be in New York during the resumed twentieth session to provide support, if and when required, to members of the Subcommission using the GeoCap software to examine the submission of Norway. The GeoCap representative met with the Subcommission to inform it about some new tools and facilities that were available in the latest version of the software.

25. During the period between the resumed twentieth and the twenty-first sessions, the Subcommission posed a further question to the delegation of Norway. Before the start of the twenty-first session, the delegation of Norway provided further detailed responses to questions posed by the Subcommission during the resumed twentieth session, and by the time the Subcommission met again during the twenty-first session, responses had been received to most questions.

26. The Subcommission also met from 24 to 28 March, and continued its analysis of the data and other materials contained in the submission of Norway, in particular responses to questions received from Norway on 17 March 2008.

27. The Subcommission met again, during the last week of the twenty-first session, from 15 to 18 April. It also held four meetings with the delegation of Norway during this period. The delegation of Norway made presentations to the

Subcommission on certain areas of the submission and responded to questions posed by the Subcommission. The Subcommission informed the delegation about its preliminary views with regard to certain areas of the submission and about its future programme of work.

28. The Subcommission decided to meet again from 1 to 12 September 2008, following the plenary part of the twenty-second session.

Item 8
Consideration of the submission made by France to the Commission pursuant to article 76, paragraph 8, of the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea

Report of the Chairman of the Subcommission regarding the progress of work during the twenty-first session

29. The Chairman of the Subcommission, Mr. Carrera, informed the Commission that during the intersessional period the members of the Subcommission performed preliminary analysis of the submission. He also informed the coastal State that there were no questions related to the submission at that stage.

30. The Chairman also reported that the Subcommission met from 14 to 18 April 2008 to continue its analysis of the data and other materials contained in the submission made by France. The members of the Subcommission decided to work in groups on the submission during the session and during the intersessional period, and to meet again in New York during the twenty-second session, from 11 to 15 August 2008.

Item 9
Consideration of the submission made by Mexico to the Commission pursuant to article 76, paragraph 8, of the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea

31. On 13 December 2007, Mexico submitted to the Commission, in accordance with article 76, paragraph 8, of the Convention, information on the limits of the continental shelf beyond 200 nautical miles from the baselines from which the breadth of the territorial sea is measured in respect of the western polygon in the Gulf of Mexico. The consideration of the submission was included in the agenda of the twenty-first session of the Commission, pursuant to rule 51, paragraph 1, of the rules of procedure.

32. The presentation on the submission of Mexico was made on 1 April 2008 by Joel Hernández García, Legal Counsel, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Mexico; Mario Alberto Reyes Ibarra, Director-General of Geology, National Institute of Statistics, Geography and Technology; Mario Alberto Góngora Villareal, Director of Hydrography, Ministry of the Navy; and Rebeca Navarro Hernández, Expert Coordinator, Petróleos Mexicanos. The delegation of Mexico also included several scientific, legal and technical advisers.

33. Mr. Hernández indicated that the submission made by Mexico was a partial one and that it had been submitted in conformity with the Convention on the Law of

the Sea, the rules of procedure of the Commission, the Scientific and Technical Guidelines of the Commission and State practice. The partial submission relates to the so-called western polygon in the Gulf of Mexico. He noted that any potential further submission regarding the area referred to as the eastern polygon[2] would be made at a later stage.

34. In respect of disputes related to the submission, Mr. Hernández noted that there were no boundary disputes with regard to any portion of the outer limits of the continental shelf beyond 200 nautical miles in the area of the partial submission, and that no note verbale in relation to the submission had been addressed to the Secretary-General. He further noted that the area of the partial submission had been determined taking into account the delimitation treaty between Mexico and the United States of America, which had been signed on 9 June 2000.

35. Regarding neighbouring States, he also noted that the Government of Mexico had held consultations with the Governments of Cuba and the United States of America in relation to the partial submission. He indicated that Mr. Carrera, member of the Commission, had assisted Mexico by providing advice with respect to the submission.

36. Mr. Hernández noted in particular that part II (main body) and part III (supporting scientific and technical data) of the submission are confidential. While part II could be considered by the members of the Commission away from Headquarters for the purpose of its examination, part III was strictly confidential under the terms of annex II to the rules of procedure and should not be made available beyond the designated GIS laboratories. The delegation then elaborated on the scientific and technical aspects of the submission.

37. Following the presentation by the delegation of Mexico, the Commission continued its meeting in closed session. Addressing the modalities for the consideration of the submission, the Commission decided that, as provided for in article 5 of annex II to the Convention on the Law of the Sea and in rule 42 of the rules of procedure of the Commission, the submission of Mexico would be addressed through the establishment of a subcommission.

38. The Commission then proceeded to establish a subcommission to examine the submission of Mexico in accordance with the established procedure (see CLCS/42). The Subcommission is composed of the following members: Mr. Astiz, Mr. Croker, Mr. Kazmin, Mr. Pimentel, Mr. Rajan, Mr. Rosette and Mr. Tamaki.

39. The Commission requested the Subcommission to meet with a view to organizing its work and electing its officers. The Subcommission met and elected Mr. Tamaki as its Chairman and Mr. Astiz and Mr. Pimentel as Vice-Chairmen. The secretariat designated Shawn Stanley as Secretary of the Subcommission. The Subcommission decided that it will meet from 2 to 5 September 2008.

[2] An area of the Gulf of Mexico enclosed by 200 mile limits measured from the coasts of Cuba, Mexico and the United States of America.

Item 10
Consideration of the revised text of the rules of procedure of the Commission

40. The Commission considered the draft amended rules of procedure as submitted to it by the Editorial Committee. On 11 April 2008, the Commission adopted by consensus the draft amended rules of procedure (CLCS/40/Rev.1).

Item 11
Report of the Chairman of the Committee on Confidentiality

41. The Chairman of the Committee on Confidentiality, Mr. Croker, reported that no circumstances had arisen requiring a meeting of the Committee.

Item 12
Report of the Chairman of the Editorial Committee

42. The Chairman of the Editorial Committee, Mr. Jaafar, reported that the Committee had met three times, on 3, 4 and 10 April 2008. The Committee considered a number of amendments to the rules of procedure on the basis of decisions made by the Commission at its eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth sessions. The Editorial Committee also received a set of new proposals. The Committee presented its proposed amendments and new rules to the Commission for its consideration. The Chairman of the Editorial Committee drew the attention of the Commission to the need to harmonize the use of certain expressions in the revised version of the rules of procedure.

Item 13
Report of the Chairman of the Scientific and Technical Advice Committee

43. The Chairman of the Scientific and Technical Advice Committee, Mr. Symonds, stated that the Committee had not received any requests for scientific and technical advice since the twentieth session.

44. In this connection, the Commission once again wishes to draw attention to the fact that, even though many States are involved in the process of preparing a submission to the Commission, no request for scientific and technical advice has been received by the Committee from any State. The Commission reaffirms its willingness to assist States in that regard and encourages them to make an official request for such assistance, if needed.

Item 14
Report of the Chairman of the Training Committee and other training issues

45. The Chairman of the Training Committee, Mr. Carrera, reported that, in the absence of any training issues, the Committee had not held any meetings.

46. During the discussion of the agenda item, the Director of the Division provided the Commission with an overview of the seventh training course on the preparation of a submission to the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf regarding the outer limits of the continental shelf beyond 200 nautical miles from the baselines from which the breadth of the territorial sea is measured. The training course, which was organized by the Division in collaboration with the Government of Trinidad and Tobago and with the support of the Global Research Information Database in Arendal, Norway, and the Federal Institute for Geosciences and Natural Resources of Germany, was conducted in Port of Spain from 14 to 18 January 2008. It was the third course organized at the subregional level. A total of 29 technical and administrative staff from the Bahamas, Barbados, Costa Rica, Cuba, Guyana, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago participated in the course. The Director expressed his gratitude to Messrs. Carrera and Charles (current members of the Commission), to Karl Hinz and Noel Francis (former members of the Commission) and to the experts from the Division for their contribution to the course as instructors and experts. The Director also expressed the gratitude of the Division to the Government of Trinidad and Tobago for the dependable and timely support provided, as well as to the other partners involved in organizing the course.

Item 15
Other matters

Solemn declaration

47. Pursuant to rule 10 of the rules of procedure, one member of the Commission, Mr. Fagoonee, who had not attended the twentieth session following his re-election as member of the Commission, made the solemn declaration required before the assumption of his duties. The solemn declaration was done in writing and was transmitted to the Director of the Division.

Briefing by the General Legal Division

48. In the light of the fact that additional information technology resources are to be made available to the Commission pursuant to General Assembly resolution 62/215, on 31 March 2008 the Division arranged a presentation for the members of the Commission on issues relating to the legal status of the Commission as well as legal issues relating to intellectual property used or developed in the course of the work of the Commission. This presentation was given by Jay W. Pozenel, Senior Legal Officer, and Kathryn Alford, Legal Officer, of the General Legal Division of the Office of Legal Affairs.

49. It was recalled that, in conformity with the legal opinion of the Legal Counsel dated 11 March 1998 (CLCS/5), members of the Commission have the status of "experts on mission for the United Nations" as provided for in sections 22 and 23 of

the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations of 13 February 1946.[3] It was noted that the Regulations Governing the Status, Basic Rights and Duties of Officials other than Secretariat Officials, and Experts on Mission (ST/SGB/2002/9) therefore apply to members of the Commission. Attention was also drawn to the rules of procedure and the internal code of conduct for members of the Commission (CLCS/40 and CLCS/47).

50. With respect to intellectual property used or developed in connection with the work of the Commission, it was noted that such property was held in the name of the United Nations for the benefit of the Commission. Furthermore, such property should not be used for the benefit of States parties other than within the framework and the scope of work and activities of the Commission. Such intellectual property was not for the benefit of the Members of the Commission, and not otherwise subject to exploitation, even with respect to "derivative works", without permission of the licensor of the intellectual property rights. It was recommended that any questions regarding the intellectual property used or developed in connection with the work of the Commission be submitted to the Secretariat.

Outstanding issues of substance regarding article 76 of the Convention

51. Certain issues of a scientific and technical nature related to the implementation of article 76 of the Convention have arisen during the consideration of submissions before the Commission. The Commission deliberated on these issues and decided to address them under the agenda item "Other matters".

52. Pursuant to a request made by the Commission at its twentieth session, Mr. Brekke made a presentation on "Views on principles regarding the submerged prolongation of a coastal State landmass and the interpretation of article 76, paragraph 6". Mr. Carrera made a presentation reflecting an additional view regarding the issue of submerged prolongation. The presentations were of a general character and did not address issues relating to any specific submission. Following the two presentations, the Commission held a discussion, during which several questions were posed and clarifications provided.

53. With reference to a decision made by the Commission at its twentieth session (see CLCS/56, paras. 27 and 28), Mr. Jaafar made a presentation on "Matters arising from a decision of the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf relating to joint submissions". The presentation addressed general principles relating to joint submissions, without reference to any specific submission.

54. Also under this agenda item, the Commission held a general discussion on the basis of a presentation by Mr. Carrera relating to "Foot of the continental slope issues concerning adjacent States".

55. The Commission decided to continue its discussion of issues of a scientific and technical nature at its next session.

Matters regarding the eighteenth Meeting of States Parties to the Convention and presentation on the workload of the Commission

56. The Chairman informed the Commission about the matters that he intended to address in his letter to the President of the eighteenth Meeting of States Parties

[3] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. I, No. 4, p. 15.

(SPLOS/177). Members of the Commission proposed the inclusion of certain additional matters to be reflected in that letter and in the statement of the Chairman to be made during the Meeting of States Parties.

Future sessions of the Commission

57. The Commission confirmed that the twenty-second session would be held from 11 August to 12 September 2008, on the understanding that the period from 18 to 29 August would be devoted to plenary meetings and that the periods from 11 to 15 August and from 2 to 12 September would be used for the technical examination of submissions at the GIS laboratories and other technical facilities of the Division. The Subcommission established to examine the submission of France will meet from 11 to 15 August. The Subcommission established to examine the submission of Norway will meet from 2 to 12 September. The Subcommission established to examine the submission of Mexico will meet from 2 to 5 September. The Subcommission established to consider the submission of four coastal States will meet from 11 to 15 August and from 2 to 5 September.

58. The Secretariat informed the Commission that the following dates had been reserved for the plenary meetings of the twenty-third and twenty-fourth sessions of the Commission: 23 March to 3 April and 24 August to 4 September 2009. The Commission requested the Secretariat to maintain the same pattern for plenary meetings of the Commission in 2010.

Trust fund

59. The Director of the Division informed the members of the Commission about the status of the trust fund for the purpose of defraying the cost of the participation of the members of the Commission from developing States in the meetings of the Commission. According to the provisional statement of accounts, as at the end of December 2007 the balance of the trust fund was $611,158.

Conclusion

60. The Commission noted with appreciation the high standard of Secretariat services rendered to it as well as the substantial upgrade of the facilities of the Division, including the acquisition of software packages, the setting up of the third GIS laboratory and the introduction of advanced technical network solutions. The Commission expressed its appreciation to the staff of the Division and other members of the Secretariat for the assistance provided to the Commission during the twenty-first session.